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In the Matter of		
Numbering Resource Optimization) CC Docket No. 99-200 /	

COMMENTS OF TELCORDIA TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

Telcordia Technologies, Inc. ("Telcordia") strongly endorses the decision of the Commission in this proceeding to utilize competitive bidding to select a Pooling Administrator.¹ However, there is a risk that such competitive bidding may be undermined in practice, and Telcordia hereby provides recommendations to minimize this risk.

In its decision, the Commission has wisely concluded that an open and fair competitive bidding framework that includes an opportunity for participation by all interested parties will ensure the selection of the most qualified, cost-efficient Pooling Administrator.² The Commission also acknowledges that many number administration functions are currently performed by a single entity, NeuStar, and it wisely recognizes the advantages of vendor diversity for number administration services to the industry and the public.³ Telcordia agrees fully with these conclusions, and believes that they will promote the public interest and the objectives of the Communications Act.

The purpose of this filing is to emphasize, however, that because of the unique circumstances that led to the Commission's decision to utilize competitive bidding for the

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Numbering Resource Optimization, ("NRO order") FCC 00-104, released Mar. 31, 2000 at paras. 148-155.

² *Id.*, para. 148.

³ *Id.*, para. 152.

Pooling Administrator, there is a likelihood that this decision may be undermined over time unless the Commission and its staff vigilantly continue to promote competition.

The most significant threat to competition is that one potential bidder, NeuStar, has effectively had sole access to the North American Numbering Council (NANC) and its Issues Management Group (IMG) for over eighteen months.⁴ This has undoubtedly provided NeuStar unfair advantages in the competitive bidding process. It alone knows the thinking of the NANC IMG on the detailed technical and operational issues involved (*i.e.*, the issues that are to be addressed in a bid), and it alone has had an opportunity to shape that thinking to accommodate the NeuStar systems and capabilities it would propose to use for pooling administration. Furthermore, the same IMG has been tasked by the NANC to revise its confidential technical requirements document in response to the NRO Order.⁵

If the significant benefits of meaningful competitive bidding are to be achieved, these NeuStar advantages must be minimized. At minimum, the Commission needs to ensure that the resulting Request for Proposals (RFP) provides all potential bidders all of the technical and operational criteria that they will need to meet; that it does so generically and not tailored to NeuStar's systems and capabilities; and that any claims for proprietary treatment of information by NeuStar not interfere with provision in the RFP of all information that is relevant to a bid.

To the extent that the Pooling Administrator will need to interface with systems and capabilities administered by NeuStar in its NANPA and NPAC administrator capacities, the Commission also needs to ensure that NeuStar provides complete information on interfacing

A number of meetings were held that excluded participants and observers that had not signed NeuStar non-disclosure agreements, *i.e.*, agreements to maintain confidential and not use information provided by NeuStar. A competitor of NeuStar obviously could not sign such an agreement without risking future charges that it had misappropriated NeuStar's information, and Telcordia accordingly did not sign such an agreement, and therefore was unable to participate in such meetings.

⁵ NRO Order, para. 152.

with those systems and capabilities, and that NeuStar will in fact provide such interfaces and diligently work cooperatively with the entity that is selected as Pooling Administrator.⁶

Similarly, the Commission needs to remain vigilant to ensure that NeuStar does not use its NANPA and NPAC administrator status to make any *ex parte* presentations on the merits or related to bidding for pooling administration, except as specifically authorized by the Commission, and then only in a manner that does not provide NeuStar advantages over other bidders. In this regard, all potential bidders should be invited to any conferences held with potential bidders by Commission staff, by the NANC or by the NANC IMG prior to submission of bids in response to the RFP, and all bidders should be accorded comparable opportunities for individual discussions with Commission staff, with the NANC and with the NANC IMG after submission of their bids, should any such discussions be conducted.

Finally, Telcordia observes that the award cycle adopted in the NRO Order is so short⁷ as to make it difficult for a Pooling Administrator bidder to recoup its start up costs. Start up costs are normally recovered over the term of a contract so as not to create a pricing bulge at the outset. However, the contemplated period, approximately 14 to 18 months (depending upon the respective RFP and bidding cycles), could have the effect of causing a bidder either to quote unnecessarily high per-year prices if it seeks to recover all start up costs in this short time period, or potentially to lose money if it sets the prices below that level and its contract is not subsequently renewed.

NeuStar will have obvious incentives not to cooperate, so as to "demonstrate" that the NANPA and Pooling Administrator functions should be combined in the future. For the benefits of competition to be realized here, it must be made clear that this type of "gamesmanship" will not be tolerated.

NRO Order at para. 155 ("the Commission will solicit bids for a national Pooling Administrator to serve until the completion of the current NANPA administrator term.")

Telcordia notes that, in contrast, the Commission set the NANPA contract for bidding on a 5 year term, which enabled the NANPA to recover its start up costs in a reasonable fashion that did not result in unnecessarily high prices. Telcordia urges the Commission to set the Pooling Administrator award period to a comparable 5 year term. Such a longer term would also raise the value of the contract, which may attract more bidders.

Respectfully submitted,

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May 19, 2000

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Angela Patterson, hereby certify that on this 19th day of May, 2000, copies of the foregoing Comments of Telcordia Technologies, Inc. in CC Docket 99-200, were served, via first-class, U.S. mail or hand delivered to the individuals listed on Attachment A.

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